

Matthew 19

This chapter like the previous one, is speaking about real issues that people had then and that have become worse over the years. We certainly need even more today the teaching of Jesus about relationships, forgiveness and the attitudes of heart that build up so easily. The divorce rate in the UK is now (1991) 1 in 3, which confirms the word that we have been hearing concerning hardness of heart. The gospel of Matthew makes a prophetic statement; **Matthew 24:12** *Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.*

This is a sign of the end times prior to the return of Jesus.

Matthew 19 v 1-9

When Jesus had finished these words, He departed from Galilee and came into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan; 2 and a large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there. 3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" 4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." 7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?" 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

The first two verses find Jesus healing the sick, it does not say what kind of sicknesses, the question that that the Pharisees ask Him indicates that He may have touched on *soul sickness*, that is to say that Jesus, knowing His Fathers' heart could have been teaching the people about relationships and the sin and the hindrances that unforgiveness bring.

Jesus' first task was always to bring the people into the place of being reconciled to God; in this way there would be room to be reconciled to one's brothers and sisters, too. Jesus then explains the Father's view on marriage, the principal that He emphasises applies both to marriage and to all relationships, it will be the same with each other as it is with our relationship with our Father. Marriage and human relationships are meant to be permanent; this is only possible to us *in Christ*. The best example of human separation is to be seen in Abraham's dealing with Lot. At least there was a touch of God's heart in it.

Genesis 13

13 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him. 2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold. 3 He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the Lord. 5 Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. 6 And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together. 7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land. 8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left." 10 Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere—this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. 11 So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. 13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord. 14 The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; 15 for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. 16 I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. 17 Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you." 18 Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the Lord. This world has no future, think about this statement! It has no future and neither do we or our children unless we do things God's way. We have entered into the age of apostacy and this is accompanied by lawlessness. The following expresses this very clearly.

2 Thessalonians 2

2 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.

8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. 13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, 17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

The God of heaven hates all sin and in Noah's day, regretted that He had made man, the result was that He dealt with sin through the flood. The promise that He made then was that He would not again use water to wipe out mankind, but He will act against all iniquity in due time, that is, when Christ comes for the final judgement of all things prophesied, foretold of these last times.

Daniel 9 v 24-27

24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. 25 So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 27 And He will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week He will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Matthew 19 v 10-15

10 The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry." 11 But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. 12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it." 13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." 15 After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.

Jesus again shows the difference between God's ideal and man's weakness; mankind has always had a problem accepting God's ways and if we are honest, we do too. Let the children come to Jesus, simply and as we read, above, we need to be transformed and become as children if we are to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus makes his point and moves on!

Matthew 19 v 16-22

16 And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" 17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." 18 Then he said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; 19 Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 20 The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" 21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

The rich man claimed that he had kept all the commandments and still was left with a question (verse 16). Jesus replies in the same way as He does today; simply give up everything, possessions, interests, time and earthly ambitions, give up your families to follow Him. Jesus wants everything first, so that we may gain everything second. He recognises that this is hard, if not impossible, but we are to do it anyway.

Matthew 19 v 23-28

23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" 26 And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. "27 Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?"

28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last; and the last, first. The rewards of obedience are greater than our sacrifices. Jesus, speaking to the Jews, says that this reward is eternal life. We have to understand that our ways are not His ways, at least not yet. The word spoken is not the word completed, we must understand the Peak-to-Peak principle if we are to continue and not loose heart.

Luke 18 verse 1

18 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart...

Luke 18 verse 6-8

6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; 7 now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? 8 I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

Finally, many who are first will be last; and the last first, this means that it is not so much what you know, but who you know and what you are practicing in your life today. Obeying the truth that you know already, hungering to know more of Jesus, His love, his teachings and His example.